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Official Organ: National Council of Teachers of English

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### THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

C. C. Certain, Editor

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Two dollars and fifty cents a year



*Courtesy, D. Appleton*

From the facsimile reproduction of the first American edition of  
ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND, by Lewis Carroll. Illustrated by  
John Tenniel.

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# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

VOL. IX

JANUARY 1932

No. 1

## Lewis Carroll, Friend of Children\*

1832—1932

ELIZABETH D. BRIGGS

Head of Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library

TO every child in the United States, the Fourth of July means the celebration of a memorable holiday with speeches, firecrackers and fun. But there is another reason why the day should be remembered for on July 4, 1862, when our country was in the throes of Civil War, there occurred in England an event of signal importance, although at the time it seemed merely an episode in the lives of three small girls and their friend and neighbor, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, an Oxford clergyman and teacher of mathematics in Christ Church College. The day was warm and sunny and as on many bright days, this young Oxford don went picnicking with the little daughters of Dr. Liddell, Dean of Christ Church College. They went in a row-boat up the river, the little girls pulling at the oars, with the occasional help of a stronger arm. After a time they moored the boat and found shelter from the burning sun in the shadow of a new made hayrack in a meadow. Then came the request, "Tell us a story". It was such a day as dreams are made of and there was nothing to disturb the peace of this meadow by the river except perhaps the swift passage of a

rabbit as it disappeared into its home beneath the hedge. In the verses which describe the setting for the story, Mr. Dodgson tells us that it was the "imperious Prima," the oldest, whose real name was Lorina, who gave the command "to begin it." And so the story of ALICE'S ADVENTURES UNDERGROUND was commenced.

It was a happy day for the three children. No doubt it was equally enjoyed by the storyteller although the entry in his diary reads merely: "I made an expedition up the river to Godstow with the three Liddells; we had tea on the bank there and did not reach Christ Church till half-past eight." On the opposite page, however, he refers to it again and states his decision to write out for Alice the fairy tale told on the previous occasion. It was an important resolution, of little apparent moment at the time and made only with the thought of giving pleasure to a child. In the years that have passed since that July day, the book which was the result of that casual decision has brought pleasure to millions of other children as well as to countless numbers of grown-ups, some of whom insist that it is essentially an adult book. Its whimsical philosophy which seems beyond the comprehension of children is to them,

\*This article was prepared under the direction of the Chairman of the Book Evaluation Committee of the Section for Library Work with Children, of the American Library Association, Miss Harriet W. Leaf.

however, the most delightful nonsense. It was Alice, the gentle Secunda of the poem, so we are told, who stipulated "there will be nonsense in it."

One hundred years have passed since on January 27, 1832, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was born in Daresbury, England. He was the oldest of eleven children. His father, a clergyman, was reserved and grave though always kindly; his mother, gentle and friendly. Charles added to the qualities inherited from his parents a sense of humor and a lively imagination. The snails, toads, and earthworms in the parish garden were his pets and in his play he created a magic land. Later he showed his inventive genius in the amusements which he provided for his younger brothers and sisters. With the help of some of his elders, he constructed a toy theatre and a troupe of marionettes. He himself wrote all of the plays.

Following the traditions of most English families of his class, Charles was sent away to school at the age of twelve. Richmond, the first school he attended, was presided over by Mr. Tate, a discerning gentleman who recognized his possibilities and in a report to his father wrote, "I do not hesitate to express my opinion that he possesses, along with other and excellent natural endowments, a very uncommon share of genius. Gentle and cheerful in his intercourse with others, playful and ready in conversation, he is capable of acquirements and knowledge far beyond his years, while his reason is so clear and so jealous of error that he will not rest satisfied without a most exact solution of whatever appears to him obscure. He has passed an excellent examination just now in mathematics, exhibiting at times an illustration of that love of precise argument, which seems to him natural."

Later he went to Rugby and, like Tom Brown whose school days at Rugby are described by Thomas Hughes, this quiet lad must have found many of his experiences there particularly trying. He especially resented the system of fagging whereby the

younger boys were bullied and abused by their taskmasters, the older boys. Some time later he declared that under no consideration would he live over again those three years. He did not care for athletics, was always studious and of a reflective turn of mind and liked nothing better than to take long walks through the Warwickshire country side, which, by reason of the proximity to Stratford must have held a peculiar charm for him.

At nineteen Charles began his residence at Christ Church and until his death in 1898 was closely associated with the college. When he became tutor he moved into a corner of the Great Quadrangle, called "Tom Quad" because it was overlooked by the great "Tom Tower" the home of the famous bell originally dedicated to St. Thomas Aquinas. It was here he became acquainted with the little Liddells and other small folk, the children of masters and tutors, and it was here that he became the two persons in one, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, writer of mathematical treatises and Lewis Carroll, writer of fairy tales and nonsense verse. Early in his teens he had developed a penchant for puzzles and parodies which he printed in various magazines edited by himself for the enjoyment of his family. These magazines were also illustrated with caricatures drawn by himself which showed considerable skill. His humor was never malicious, but always kindly, a quality which he carried over into his later writings.

Alice Liddell, who is now Mrs. Reginald Hargreaves, has told us of the beginning in the meadow of the story of Alice's adventures and of its continuation on the river on many sunny afternoons. It was to her that he gave at Christmas time the original manuscript of the story printed painstakingly by hand and illustrated by himself. He called it "A Christmas gift to a dear child." There was no thought of publication at the time but later at the suggestion of George Macdonald the manuscript was submitted to a publisher and promptly accepted. To John Tenniel was entrusted the task of suitably illustrating it

and on July 4, 1865, three years after the memorable river expedition, the first presentation copy of *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* by Lewis Carroll was given to Alice Liddell, the second copy to Princess Beatrice, the youngest daughter of Queen Victoria. There is a story which is often told of Queen Victoria's interest in Lewis Carroll. It is said that she was so delighted with the story of Alice's adventures that she requested that other works of the author be sent to her. To her surprise she received a package of learned treatises on mathematics. Although this anecdote has been printed many times, it was refuted by Walter De la Mare in articles published in 1930 in both England and America. He gives as his authority Lewis Carroll's own denial of the truth of the incident in one of his later works.

Lewis Carroll was always very fond of children, especially little girls. He was more at ease in their presence. To the day of his death in 1898 he numbered among his friends many who were his devoted admirers not alone because of his writings but because in the hours spent in his rooms at Oxford, on the sands at the seashore, on the river, or in Christ Church meadows they learned to know him as no grown person ever could. Photography was one of his chief hobbies and in his rooms he kept a large number of costumes in which his small visitors were arrayed when they sat for their pictures. There were also many music boxes of a variety of shapes and sizes. If for any reason these failed to function properly, their versatile owner repaired them while wide-eyed, fascinated little girls looked on.

In later years when, owing perhaps to more meticulous care in writing, Lewis Carroll was unable to reach the standard of cleverness attained in *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* and *THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS*, he was still able to charm his small correspondents. The letters which he wrote Isa Bowman, who in 1888 became the new Alice in the revival of the dramatic production at the Globe theatre in London, show his rare un-

derstanding of children and their interests, and his ability to say very simple things in a way to delight young readers.

To *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* he owed his fame and with the exception of *THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS* nothing that he wrote afterward approached its spontaneous humor and charm. Sir Walter Besant in a letter to a friend once said, "It is one of the very few books in the world which can be read with equal pleasure by old and young. . . It is the only child's book of nonsense that is never childish."

The book has been translated into many languages and the poem "You are old, Father William" into Arabic. There have been many dramatic performances both by professionals and amateurs. The dramatic presentation of the Mad Hatter's tea party is a perennial favorite. The "Garden of live flowers," "looking glass insects" and other scenes from *THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS* have been given orchestral representation and the nonsense verses from *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* set to music.

On April 3, 1928, the original manuscript under the title *ALICE'S ADVENTURES UNDERGROUND* was sold in London for 15,400 pounds, the largest price ever paid in England up to that time for a book sold at auction. Later its purchaser resold it together with two copies of the first edition, for more than \$150,000. It is now in the Rosenbach collection in Philadelphia.

Many critics and writers of note have paid tribute to *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*, among them Walter De la Mare. \* "Every century, indeed every decade of it flaunts its own little extravagances and aberrations from a reasonable human standard. Passing fashions in dress and furniture, in plays, music, and pictures and even in ideas and sentiments resemble not only the caprices of our island climate but also the extremes made manifest in English character, both of which in spite of such excesses yet remain true to a more or less happy medium. And

\* "Lewis Carroll" by Walter De la Mare in *THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW*, September, 1930.



# Some Implications of Psychology for the Appreciation Lesson

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WHAT is the appreciation lesson about which there seems some uncertainty? What is its educational objective and how is it to be effected? To answer these questions psychology has some suggestions which, it seems to the writer, have not hitherto been brought forward.

First, what is the aim? Is it to secure for the child specific affective experiences, which as feelings and emotions are probably related respectively to certain states of the nervous system and to certain actions of the viscera and glands? Or is it to get him to increase his intellection, which in its more intense and meaningful phase is the action of the cortical centers in analyzing, synthesizing, and weighing ideas of various kinds? Or do we wish him to have both experiences with a definite psychological relation between them?

If the law of effect is accredited, the teacher wishes the learner to experience a feeling of satisfaction whenever any idea or activity is being taught. For instance, when the child is learning to think "16" when presented with the situation " $7 + 9 = ?$ ", we want him to feel pleased every time he successfully brings the "16" to mind. In this case, however, the feeling is desired not so much for its own sake but because it helps the child to think "16" more readily the next time he meets the same situation.

But in an appreciation lesson this feeling seems to loom up more as the educational end itself. We want the child to read the selection or to look at the picture and then to experience a feeling of pleasure. Perhaps our increased emphasis upon this feeling as the end is due to our realization both of the increased need of educating the child for worthy leisure and of our apparent failure

to influence him to continue reading good literature or looking at good pictures after he leaves school. But the question still remains, are we aiming to give him an experience of pleasure or to establish within him the habit of reading good literature or looking at good pictures.

Possibly the answer is a matter of personal choice, but surely they who propose that enjoyment as the end do not do so without regard for the worth of the situations that arouse the feeling. But perhaps these advocates think that this feeling is itself the assurance of this worth. Are not our sentiments the essence of our valuing experience? It seems so. We just do not value things irrespective of our affections for them. But this fact does not necessitate a belief that the affections are themselves the determinants of the worth of their objects. Some of their psychological characteristics are pertinent to this question.

As responses our feelings shift readily from one stimulus to another. If we have already learned to enjoy hearing certain statements made and a stranger makes them in our presence, we soon learn to have this same pleasant feeling whenever he appears. Every public speaker customarily takes advantage of this easy shift. Furthermore, he knows that he must secure a deep regard for his own person before he may begin to utter new and strange ideas to his listeners. But when this deep regard is finally secure, there may be seemingly no end to the intellectually unverifiable statements which he may make and have his hearers wholeheartedly accept. Their esteem for him shifts as a response to the statements he utters. This feeling of pleasure, now attached to the statements, is even accepted as evidence of their worth or

truthfulness. The feeling of displeasure shifts in like manner and is soon accepted as evidence of the lack of worth or untruthfulness of the statement or idea producing it. Our likes and dislikes, therefore, are built up very largely by chance associations.

This casual attachment of the affections and the ease with which they are accepted as indices of the worth of the circumstances arousing them easily explain why humankind can possess such contrary prejudices, and such incompatible political, moral, and religious beliefs, and why individuals are willing to defend these with their lives rather than with logic and experimentation. In turn, this large variety of beliefs and prejudices indicates very strongly that our feelings, even though they are essential to our valuing, are not valid criteria of their own worth, or of the worth of the objects or ideas arousing them. We must search for other measures, and these undoubtedly lie in intellectual discrimination.

The preceding argument signifies that the joy experienced by the child in reading a selection or in looking at a picture is not the teacher's exclusive aim. It is in part to increase the pupil's intellection about these very same experiences, and the more complex they become, the more is this intellection necessary. What the teacher really desires is that the learner's satisfactions shall come as responses to his reflection and, in turn, become the stimuli to further reflection. It is this ever increasing circle of satisfaction and thinking that the teacher seeks.

But how are we to help children to attain this ever widening circle of experience? This easy shift of the feelings and emotions indicates a part of the answer. It is that every surrounding physical fact, both of sight and sound, shall be conducive to the children's well-being and pleasure during the conduct of the appreciation lesson. Every stimulus already effective in bringing them satisfaction ought to be brought into play. The English room of the school ought to be a beautiful one to the children. Furthermore,

the teacher should be liked by his pupils. No factor is more essential than this. The disliked teacher can effect little but dissatisfaction toward what he does, especially if what he does has a tendency to arouse any degree of intellectual perplexity. An objector may argue that these surrounding stimuli have little logical relation with what the teacher does and wants, but, however true this may be, they have a psychological relation that must not be disregarded. Bringing them into the situation makes it possible to shift the pleasure aroused by them as a response to what the teacher is now doing or to the literary selection under consideration. The methods of the church and theater bear ample testimony of this.

Another part of the answer comes from the fact that satisfactory terminations of fundamental human drives are very apt to arouse a feeling of pleasure. Likewise is this feeling evoked when the child lives in his imagination these same successful terminations. The teacher is certain, therefore, to arouse the pupil's pleasure if he has him read the selections which depict the happy endings of momentarily thwarted drives, and he is sure to add to this feeling if he sees that the greater portion of these selections are easily within the child's comprehension. The pupil will then get the imagery with but little annoyance to himself.

There is a third possible means of getting a child to have pleasure upon reading a given selection. It consists, first, in stimulating him to feel a desire or need for expressing a certain experience or idea, which, it happens, the selection expresses; second, in getting him to realize his own deficiency in doing so; and, finally, in having him read the selection. The resulting solution of his difficulty will without doubt evoke a feeling of satisfaction. This process is well manifested when a person must express condolence to a bereaved friend. How he welcomes the existing expression of some poet who says what he wants to say better than he can! In school a teacher may stimulate the child to imagine himself



a tree, a flower, or grass in the winter time, asleep, without leaf or blade to indicate life, and to want to say what he thinks they would say. When he begins to perceive his own inadequacy, the teacher may introduce Edith Thomas's poem, "Talking In Their Sleep." The poem arouses the child's pleasure because it relieves him of his difficulty. This approach, however, may readily become very artificial.

But we are still left with the problem of getting the child's intellection and pleasure to increase abreast. Our failure to do so has been largely due to our practice of choosing selections which are too difficult for the child or which present him with too many unsolvable perplexities. We adults are so anxious that he learn to revere the fine and noble expressions of our prophets and poets that we are tempted to mold him in that direction long before he is capable of it. And there is hardly anything so productive of dissatisfaction as to meet a series of intellectual problems that can not be solved. By pushing these selections upon the child, we have been arousing his dislike for them and have, therefore, been defeating our own purpose.

But the answer to our problem does not lie in keeping the pupil from meeting intellectual perplexities in his reading. Neither do we have to do so in order to keep a feeling of satisfaction existing. Happily the situation in which he apprehends an intellectual difficulty, desires that it be cleared up and in which it is cleared up produces considerable gratification upon his part. The task of getting feeling and intellection to run abreast, therefore, lies neither in choosing only the selections that the child can quite understand, even though he enjoys reading them immensely, nor in forcing him to read those selections that are far beyond his present comprehension.

There is a knack to this task. It lies first in discerning and selecting the literature the major portion of which is readily understood by the child and capable of producing a feeling of pleasure, but of sufficient interest and

difficulty together to arouse a few intellectual problems which he feels he must solve in order to secure the fullest possible enjoyment. The optimum condition exists when the learner perceives these problems through his own insight rather than through the stimulus of the teacher's questions. This does not mean that the selection must not have other intellectual problems for the learner which he does not then perceive, but it does mean that he must not now perceive too many or be made to do so by the teacher's questions. Otherwise he loses interest and possibly acquires an aversion for the selection. The proper number of problems for the learner to become conscious of depends upon his existing ability to handle such problems and to be happy in face of them.

The second part of this knack lies in the teacher's divining just what intellectual difficulties have occurred to the child and then in properly helping him to solve them. If the learner does not perceive as many problems as he can solve with happiness, let the teacher divine those that he is about ready to perceive and then bring them to a focus by questions.

Selections, then, which in and of themselves arouse too many and too difficult problems for the learner ought to be postponed for use until he is more experienced and mature. Yet it is not impossible to use selections which possess potentially more difficult features than he is now able to grasp, provided no effort is made to make him do so. Such selections or rather such parts of them as fit the optimum condition set forth above may be read to him now, and as he grows they or other of their parts may be read again with resulting increased insight and pleasure. These selections grow upon the child. Such is possible, for instance, with "The Village Blacksmith," "America the Beautiful," and "The Chambered Nautilus." But considerable care must be taken in this lest the child be made to experience too many unsolvable problems. One wonders why more than the first part of "The Village Black-

smith" or the first stanza of "America the Beautiful" should be read to fourth or even sixth grade children.

Finally, when a child once appreciates a selection, why not give him the opportunity to do so again at a proper interval and under proper conditions? Why not use the law of exercise? Why not strengthen the bond? Indeed, this principle should be applied to selections which the child can now fully understand. He should be permitted to read them or to hear them read over and over again. Why do we enjoy the old poems and songs? Is it not simply habitualized feelings? But this principle is also applicable to selections which the child cannot now so fully understand, but in which there are per-

plexities that he is now about able to perceive and solve, or that he will be able to perceive and solve as he matures. I can not understand why we give a pupil only once the opportunity to appreciate any portion, for instance, of "The Chambered Nautilus," or "The Merchant of Venice." Why should not the parts which he does esteem as well as those which he will increasingly esteem be read many times throughout his high school and college English courses?

It is through a careful repetition of pleasant old experiences and a careful introduction of new difficulties that the child may some day enjoy intellectual uncertainty even though he can not clear it up. He will then truly possess the scientific spirit.

### LEWIS CARROLL, FRIEND OF CHILDREN

(Continued from page 7)

so too with literature. The Victorian age was rich in these exotics. It amuses us moderns, who have dried and discolored them to make little herbariums of them. . . But there is one Victorian wild flower which makes any such condescension absurd—and it is called Nonsense. Unlike other 'Sports' of its time, this laughing hearts-ease, this indefinable 'cross' between humor, fantasy and a sweet reasonableness, has proved to be of a hardy habit and is still living and fragrant."

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#### MUSIC

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*NONSENSE SONGS*: The Songs That Came Out Wrong from Alice in Wonderland. A song cycle: the lyrics by Lewis Carroll, the music by Liza Lehmann, Chappell & Co., Ltd., London

*SONGS FROM ALICE IN WONDERLAND and THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS*. Music by Lucy E. Broadwood; il. by Charles Folkard, A. & C. Black, Ltd.

*THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS*. Five Pictures from Lewis Carroll, by Deems Taylor, Opus 12, Suite for orchestra, J. Fischer & Brother, N. Y.

# A Council Program of Scientific Guidance in Elementary School Composition\*

M. R. TRABUE

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THE most striking feature of the subject assigned to me is the word "guidance." Why was the word "guidance" used, rather than "instruction" or "teaching"? What are the important differences between guiding and teaching? Do these differences suggest anything important with regard to the character of an effective program in English composition?

Guidance seems to me to be a much more dynamic word than teaching. Guidance implies the presence of an active energy or motive power. A child who is ready and anxious to say something can be guided into more effective ways of saying it, but one who has nothing to say cannot be successfully guided in English composition. While it is possible to think of teaching English composition to pupils who are not anxious to learn—perhaps some teachers find it difficult to conceive of pupils who are anxious to learn to write—it is certainly impossible to think of guiding in English composition pupils who have no urge toward self expression. Teaching has too often implied silence and immobility on the part of the of the learners, but guiding very definitely implies activity and energy in those who are guided.

Guidance suggests also a goal to be reached or a purpose to be achieved. One who goes hunting or exploring in a strange land may employ a guide to help him find his way to the place where the wild game or the strange phenomena are reported to be. The guide does not actually carry the hunter on his back, but the greater experience of the guide helps the hunter to avoid many errors and bypaths which might otherwise annoy and

delay him in the accomplishment of his purpose. The hunter's goal is reached and his purpose is accomplished more easily and more speedily because of the guide's assistance. One who has no purpose or goal to achieve has no need of a guide.

In this connection it is perhaps not entirely beside the point to note that a good guide does not always follow exactly the same route in arriving at a desired goal. If he finds the usual avenue of approach blocked, he tries another. He is not entirely overcome by the loss of an important piece of equipment, for he knows how to adapt available materials to his own ends. A storm or an accident may overtake him and cause him to spend two weeks in attaining a goal that would normally require only one week, but a real guide is rarely dependent upon a single route or upon a particular piece of equipment. He is paid, as the guide in English composition should be paid, for his resourcefulness in attaining desired objectives even more than for his experience in following the usual course.

Please do not mistake my approval of guides in composition as a condemnation of teachers. As a group, teachers are about the most conscientious people to be found. For generations they have been told to teach English composition, and they have tried faithfully to teach it. If they have failed to guide pupils into effective English habits, it is because they have been told to teach rather than to guide. I am delighted to have been assigned a topic in which "guidance in elementary school composition" is the central concept rather than "teaching composition," for I believe that our results would be vastly improved by the adoption of guidance as the dominating purpose of the composition teacher.

\*Paper read before the Elementary School Section, National Council of Teachers of English, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 28, 1931.



Another unusual element in the topic assigned to me is the word "scientific." How does "scientific guidance" differ from any other type of guidance? The dictionary indicates that the word "scientific" means "agreeing with, or depending on, the rules or principles of science." "Scientific guidance" would therefore be guidance which is in harmony with or depends upon the data and generalizations of science. I am unable to believe that any intelligent teacher would wish intentionally to give guidance that was not in harmony with the facts and general laws of science, but I am convinced that composition teaching is often quite directly opposed to some of the most important findings of biological and psychological science.

One of the simplest of the scientific facts that should not be overlooked by the composition teacher is that all pupils are using language constantly, every day, in almost every activity of their lives. It should not be necessary to mention this obvious fact, but there are composition teachers who seem to imagine that the child's only use of language is in the English class. Considering the extremely small fraction of the pupil's total use of English represented by the few sentences uttered in the English class, one may well be surprised that the average amount of improvement resulting from language instruction is as large as it actually is. An effective program of scientific guidance in composition should make definite provisions for dealing helpfully with the extensive use by pupils of language outside the English class.

Another of the most important facts or scientific principles for every teacher to recognize and to use in his work is the one known as "individual differences." Each child differs from other children in size, in appearance, in abilities, in attitude, in purposes, in interests, and in general personality. Every type of objective test yet devised has revealed these individual differences. It matters not how similar the training received by different people through eight years of elementary school, four years of high school, and an-

other four years of college, their abilities and their needs continue to vary tremendously. Regardless of the amount of care an English teacher may take to group his pupils homogeneously according to some standard test, he will find that these pupils are heterogeneous with regard to other important characteristics. Individual differences cannot be eliminated. They must be recognized and used intelligently, in English composition as well as in every other subject.

Not only do individuals differ in their actual achievements at any given time, but they differ as well in their ultimate possibilities of achievement. Two third-grade pupils who are exactly equal in their present abilities in English composition may have vastly different possibilities of ultimate development. One pupil may never be able to write more effectively than he does now, regardless of the amount of training he may be given, while another may become a literary genius. One writer or speaker may develop extremely slowly, while another may develop very rapidly. To ignore these differences in ultimate possibilities and in rates of growth is one of the most serious errors a teacher can make. Uniform goals to be achieved and uniform rates of development cannot be expected from the members of any class.

The concept of minimum essentials in English seems for this reason to be quite unscientific. If we assume that the various elements in good composition can be arranged in order according to their relative degrees of difficulty, it is fairly easy to draw a line at some point on the scale and to say that the items below that point constitute the minimum essentials which all pupils must acquire. But there will still be hundreds of pupils who cannot acquire these so-called minimum essentials, regardless of how low in the scale the standard may be set. The concept of minimum essentials is based upon a logic of subject matter, or upon preconceived notions about school organization, rather than upon the science of human nature. A program of scientific guidance in English composition

would be stated in terms of "the next steps for this particular pupil" rather than in terms of a uniform list of items to be mastered by all pupils.

Here again I must ask you not to misinterpret my thought. I approve most heartily of such attempts as the late Professor Sterling A. Leonard was making to identify the items of form and expression which are actually unacceptable in the speech and writings of educated people. These items must be identified. The National Council of Teachers of English should see that Professor Leonard's work is completed and published. I approve whole-heartedly also of such investigations as Dr. L. J. O'Rourke is carrying on with the assistance of the Psychological Corporation. We must know just how much difficulty the pupils of each grade have in learning to use each of the forms that are commonly misused.

While I approve and am anxious to assist in any investigation that will help teachers to know what forms are correct and to understand the normal order in which pupils learn to use correct forms, I disapprove with equal vigor any attempt to require all pupils to reach any predetermined level of achievement or standard of excellence. It is impossible to set the standard low enough to make it possible for all children to attain it. Let us provide all pupils with good models and attempt to inspire in each individual pupil an ambition to make for himself the greatest possible progress. While we help each pupil to measure his progress objectively at regular intervals, let us avoid the unscientific procedure of setting up any minimum standards to be required uniformly of all pupils.

Another important principle, which has developed from recent scientific research in biology, physiology, and psychology, makes it clear that it is the whole situation, internal and external, to which an organism responds. The well-known "identical elements," which the English teacher earnestly hopes a child may see in his playground speech and in the sentences printed in his language textbook, are often so few and so inconspicuous in com-

parison with the multitude of dissimilar elements, that the child utterly fails to see them. Until the composition class situation identifies itself intimately with the pupil's interests and activities outside that class, there can be little hope for any large "transfer of training" from the class to the outside situation. Our knowledge of modern genetic science makes it quite evident that we cannot depend upon small items of identity to carry the burden of good English expression from the formal classroom exercise to the dynamic life outside. In as far as possible the entire pattern of interests and activities from his life outside the classroom must be present in the situation in which the child learns to speak and to write English.

Still another principle of science to which our program of guidance in English composition must conform is the one which has come to be known as the "law of effect." Dr. E. L. Thorndike formulated about twenty years ago a series of very interesting generalizations which he called the "laws of learning." His recent investigations have reduced the number of these laws and placed the burden for the success of a learning process upon the personal satisfaction which the learner feels in doing successfully the task he set out to do. In other words, the satisfaction of success is now recognized in psychology as the most potent force in the entire learning process. Stated in terms of learning to express oneself in good English, the principle declares that pupils are most likely to use the right form again if a strong sense of personal satisfaction accompanies or follows its first use.

A large part of the burden for improving composition writing has heretofore been thrown by composition teachers on a principle which Thorndike's recent results seem definitely to discredit. The English teacher has traditionally marked the pupil's errors with red ink. He has attempted in this manner and in other ways to punish the pupil for his mistakes. Modern psychological science says that such procedures are not effective. Such improvements as occurred un-



der this plan in the past can probably be attributed to the gentle satisfaction which the pupil felt in finding, when his theme was returned, an absence of red ink marks on some expression which he had ventured to use for the first time. Dr. Thorndike tells me that punishment of the wrong response does not strengthen the right response, that it does not even reduce the number of wrong responses made in a given situation, and that in many cases it actually increases the tendency to make wrong responses. If our program of guidance is to be scientific, it must make intelligent use of these latest findings in educational science. Situations must be provided in which the right responses will be made, accompanied and followed by the genuine satisfactions of work well done.

With these interpretations of the most distinctive words and phrases in the topic assigned to me, I wish to state briefly some of the characteristics which seem to me to be essential in a program of scientific guidance in elementary school composition, and then to outline for your consideration and criticism a tentative program of guidance.

In the first place, I suggest that any sound program of guidance must recognize that the final test of its effectiveness is to be found in life situations outside the English classroom.

The pupil who writes or speaks correctly in the classroom, but incorrectly everywhere else, has not been effectively guided in composition. Literary quality in the classroom is of value to the extent that it carries over into such efforts at extramural composition as require the same quality of expression.

In the second place, a sound program of guidance will provide the pupil with situations in which improvements in his compositions will be recognized and will be to him a source of real personal satisfactions. The mere approval of a teacher is not a sufficiently strong satisfaction to the average child to bring about great improvements. To secure maximum learning there must be in the learner a genuine feeling that he has accom-

plished something that is highly worth while to him personally.

A third characteristic which should be found in the guidance program is a clear recognition that one of the primary objectives to be sought is a strong personal desire on the part of each pupil to express himself well. Unless a pupil desires personal effectiveness in expression, no amount of instruction and drill is likely to make much improvement. I am convinced that the development of this attitude in the pupil is of primary importance, and I do not believe that this attitude can be developed effectively without bringing into the learning situation the entire pattern of interests, ambitions, and activities which characterize the individual pupil's life outside the English classroom.

A fourth characteristic of an effective guidance program involves the active cooperation of all other teachers in the school. As long as other teachers encourage boys and girls to express themselves in careless and illiterate ways, the English teacher's declarations that poor English composition will be a handicap to them in life are bound to be discounted. If the English class is the only place in which attention is given to the pupil's composition, he is not likely to think of composition as a really important matter.

A fifth feature of a scientific guidance program in composition is a clear recognition that improvements in expression are specific and that they are acquired one at a time. No lasting good is accomplished by a general admonition to "improve your English." Improvements in expression are usually made by inserting a descriptive modifier in one place, by changing a particular phrase in another place, and by other specific changes in a particular composition by some individual writer. General advice and admonitions do not provide helpful guidance.

Perhaps it is presumptuous of me to attempt to outline a definite guidance program, but I know of no better way to bring about fruitful discussion of the problem. I have been observing and measuring the results of

instruction in English composition classes for the past twenty years, and I do not believe any great risks would be incurred in making a radical change in our conception of the task as well as in our instructional practices in the classroom. The experiment seems to me, at least, to be well worth trying.

The essential feature of the program I propose consists in giving the teacher of composition an entirely new status. Instead of performing the usual functions of a teacher, making assignments and then hearing the recitations or reading and marking themes, let the teacher of composition become the personal guide and helper of the pupils in solving all their composition problems. Individual guidance is to be substituted for classroom instruction.

Every child in school uses language from early morning until late at night. There is no end to the problems of expression that he must meet every day, but the average child rarely thinks of going to his English teacher for help in meeting them. It is possible that he thinks of his composition teacher as a person who requires him to write so many themes each month, rather than as a sympathetic friend who is anxious to help him to make his history reports more interesting or to write more entertaining letters to his friends. If the composition teacher could establish in the minds of the pupils the idea that he is available at all times, and that he is really anxious to serve as a guide and partner in their attempts to speak and to write effectively, I am convinced that his assistance would be in much greater demand and that the results in English composition would be greatly improved.

Such a working partnership between teacher and pupil should make it easy for the teacher to help the pupil to note his weaknesses, to suggest appropriate drill exercises for their correction, and to obtain for the pupil real pleasure from the use of more effective English expression. Approaching the pupil as a helper rather than as a taskmaster, the guide in composition would win a more

intimate understanding of the pupil's real difficulties and purposes, and would for that reason be able to work more effectively than as a teacher of classes. Attention would be centered on the problem of how the pupil could present his material in order to accomplish a specific purpose rather than on where mistakes had been made. The pupil's memories of such a guide would not be colored by red-ink criticisms, but by sincere gratitude for assistance in attaining desired effects.

To make such a guidance relationship most effective, the teachers of other subjects must be enlisted in the program to the extent of giving definite recognition to improvements in written and oral work. Whether this recognition is given in form of higher grades in geography, arithmetic, and history, in the form of higher English grades, or in some other form does not seem to me to be an important element of the problem. The particular methods employed in securing cooperation from the other teachers and in making the pupils conscious that all teachers in the school are interested in good English should probably be worked out to meet the special conditions in each local school, but it is essential that the pupils be brought to see clearly that good English is really considered important by the teachers of other subjects.

Such a program of guidance might in some schools mean giving up a regular sequence of lessons in English composition to be taken by all pupils in the grade whether they need them or not. It would certainly place upon the guide a greater responsibility than the usual teacher has taken for discovering the individual pupil's immediate difficulties and needs in composition. It would give the guide, however, a wonderful opportunity to share actively in all the varied activities and enterprises organized by other teachers or by groups of pupils. The composition period at school would become a laboratory or conference period rather than a recitation. Perhaps the only book involved would be reference and drill materials. In a sense the composition guide would perhaps lose some of

# The Place of Poetry in Children's Literature

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THE subjects of poetry are drawn from Nature and human life: whatever man perceives, feels, thinks, wills, or does. Poetry sets before us man's emotions, and his moral character, his conceptions, and intentions, his aspirations, his ideals and his deeds; in short, his career and the world in which he moves." "The purpose of poetry is to stir our emotions and to assist us to appreciate the meaning of life as it is presented to us in the light of goodness and beauty."

With the purpose of poetry so defined by writers on the subject, we must feel the desirability of having it included in the reading interests of adult life. Can this be gained other than by starting with the child and leading him, as Kenneth Grahame says "through a wicket gate, giving admission to that wide domain, with its woodland glades, its pastures and arable, its walled and scented gardens here and there, and so to its sunlit, and sometimes misty, mountain tops"? There may be other ways. Most assuredly many people are grateful to enthusiastic high school teachers and college professors for having given admission to that "wide domain." The gate had been closed to them before. Yet, even then, have the gates not creaked heavily on rusty hinges as they swung open,—sometimes just the barest crack, seldom wide-flung? Do they not still bar out many whom the devotees would see enter, to whom the "woodland glades" were not alluring and the "sometimes misty mountain tops" not visible? But to the child creeping through, these paths do entice on and on; and once within, the roads lead to the mountain tops where there is joy and light. Suggestible childhood, then, is the time for the "music of the words and the beauty of the images which move our feelings and

awaken within us a passion for the good and fair."

Modern psychology has contributed little to the arts, but it has shown, even here, the efficacy of starting with what you have and leading on from there. Many writers on poetry, many observers of children, are agreed that poetry, with its rhyme and rhythm is natural to them. The first literature that is put into their hands is Mother Goose—or, in other than English speaking countries, its counterpart,—poetry at the infant's level.

Prescott says that a poet has died young in the breast of the most stolid; that every child thinks naturally in the way the poet must try to think later. If that be so—and creative education seems to point to the fact that it is true, at least in part,—then we have the answer to the cry that humanity has not kept pace with the mechanical development of the world. In this dormant, or throttled, power may lie the force that will combat, or rather parallel the marvels of science.

The myths of children, Prescott finds, contain both the germs of poetry and science,—that they develop in two directions: towards literature in the expansion of language by metaphor; and towards scientific thought in the invention of play and story by offering fanciful explanations of the environment which cannot yet be rationally explained. A child begins with poetry but soon has to learn prose. A child begins with a scientific explanation and is encouraged to increase his understanding of the scientific and to delve deeper into its mysteries. Is it not an outcome to be expected, therefore, that the scientific-minded now far outnumber and overshadow the poetic-minded? If poetry in childhood can do aught in saving to adult



life "the wild wit, invention ever new" which Gray attributes to childhood, and the sentiment of the beauties and wonders of the world around, then its place is assured.

Grace Conkling thinks that poetry belongs to children. "Their minds are full of imagery; they invent names for things as soon as they can talk at all, revealing names which evoke the inhabiting spirit of the objective world. They are naturally rhythmic." And another writer says: "There never was a normal baby born into the world who did not bring with him a love for poetry; and the fact that so few adults retain a trace of this pure delight points to the need of conscious effort on the parent's part to foster the child's natural gift."

Which brings us to the various reasons we find for placing it in the schools as poetry *per se*. Here it now runs the hourly risk of no longer being the natural, spontaneous call to beauty, music and imagery, but of becoming so many poems to be studied this half term, so many the next, chosen by some mental scale of testing and grading. Following this measured tendency, rationally, the next step would be in the newer books for the study and memorization of poetry to be chosen because they contain the first five hundred words of the Thorndike list! So little of the snatching of the interest as it is tossed out—so little of a poem gleaned because it fits a particular class mood!

To a nine year old boy who was studying Greek life in school and whose eyes and ears were keenly awake to anything Grecian, I said one day,

"Found a new poem today I think you'd like. Want to hear it?"

"M-m-m, what is it?"

"Neptune's Steeds."<sup>1</sup>

"Oh, yes!"

It would have been welcomed as eagerly had it been "Neptune's Theory of Ratiocination" or anything else as unheard of. The mere name "Neptune" in which he was

<sup>1</sup> William Lawrence Chittenden. POEMS THAT WILL TAKE PRIZES. Compiled by Shurter and Watkins.

greatly interested formed the entering wedge. The fact that there was nothing else Greek in the poem mattered not at all. Its swinging rhythm and vivid pictures carried it after that.

"Like it?"

"Gee, it's swell!" and forthwith begged for a copy to take to school. The class, also tuned at the time to a high Greek pitch, greeted it with the same acclaim, and begged to be allowed to memorize it! And yet it was not in the course of study! Poetry thus brought in spontaneously will open up avenues of thought and beauty and will lead to child development as claimed for it.

Children are naturally good critics of poetry, according to Lambern, "for they are akin to the poet, who is the child of the race; and they have an instinctive appreciation of its beauty. To develop this critical instinct, to reveal it as a means of culture within reach of the very poorest, and as naturally leading on to interest in other arts, is the purpose of our poetry lessons."

The distinctive service Mrs. McClintock expects of poetry is "the cultivation of the children's sense of the musical side of literature; the opportunity for appreciating some of the minor beauties of the literary art; and among the older children, acquaintance with the more highly imaginative method and the more intensely emotional moods."

And according to Miss Olcott: "Harmony of expression, fine and noble language, not only satisfy taste but stir thought to action and often to initiation; this is notably true of the effects of poetry. . . Educational function of poetry as a formative of style is, therefore, important. It appeals to a child's native sense of rhythm, and his delight in ethically and aesthetically clothed thought proves beyond question that poetry is an essential factor in a child's mental development."

When it comes to the means of carrying out these various aims, ideals and aspirations, there is greater divergence of opinion. Kenneth Grahame thinks this can best be done by the lyrics. His CAMBRIDGE BOOK OF POETRY is confined to lyrics—beautiful, but a rather

one-sided diet in these days of balance even in feasts.

Others, Miss Olcott among them, think the induction best made through the story-telling poems and ballads. Mrs. Conkling and Miss Hunt are in accord in thinking children will accept anything given, though Mrs. Conkling is more sweeping in her choice, setting up fewer barriers of adult poetry.

Miss Hunt says: "Children enjoy an infinite number of things they do not understand—understand far more than they can express; understanding grows by leaps and bounds. We shall stop trying to stint their active imaginations by keeping them so long on baby rhymes." Mrs. Conkling feels, too, that the usual attitude towards children is patronizing and sentimental; that they should not be given too much Stevenson, Longfellow and Field, but William Blake, and Shelley, Robert Frost, Walter De la Mare, and Keats.

She thinks, too, the appreciation should be bound up with the child's own urge to make something new, to express. An outlet should be given to his "fearlessness and quaintness of observation, his precise and at the same time daring imagery; the honest dislike of sham, the responsiveness to rhythm not monotonous, but infinitely varied."

Mrs. Conkling does not say that appreciation comes through the child's creating. The creating comes because of the appreciation of the poetry. The little boy who wrote the Indian poem quoted below had very little idea of the understanding of poetry-writing,—appreciation in that sense. He likes poetry and this "just came." Perhaps it is a circle, each contributing to the other,—each having its place in the additional love of poetry.

### The Indian Sunrise

On Sunrise Rock with his tom-tom is an Indian  
With a wrinkled face;  
His garments made of leather,  
In his hair is the war eagle's feather;  
With his tom-tom he is singing his morning  
prayer.

Behind a log the partridge is drumming;  
In the woods the birds are humming  
To the tune of the tom-tom.

On Sunrise Rock with his tom-tom is an  
Indian.

Dramatizing poetry, too, is another avenue of approach. This gives the chance for creating within bounds; of repeating the poem and in that way of becoming familiar with it; of making the poet's spirit the child's own. Children who would accept poetry in no other way can undoubtedly be led gently into the love of it in this way. It is also making use of a natural impulse of the child to act out things. It thus takes him back to the earliest literature,—poetry and drama,—poetic drama, natural, beautiful, vital, soothing.

So let us give the children poetry and more and more poetry, always remembering, however, that: "Poetry is not a means of supplying useful information or of training the memory except to learn more poetry—or improving the morals, or providing sage axioms or grammatical examples; or serving practical purposes, let us with joy admit and declare. It is the charm and glory of poetry that its high and single purpose is to make glad the heart of man," and, we may add, of the child.

### A COUNCIL PROGRAM OF SCIENTIFIC GUIDANCE

(Continued from page 16)

his present academic dignity by attempting to "become the servant of all," but I venture to suggest that in so doing he would probably

"become great" in the improvements produced in the attitudes and abilities of his pupils in English composition.



# The Vocabulary and Good Speech Habits

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SINCE most adults speak far more than they write, oral English and the speaking vocabulary should be emphasized in all school work. The problem confronting us, as instructors, is first, to provide training in connected speaking and second, to enlarge the child's reading, speaking and writing vocabularies.

The two-fold endeavor to appeal to the interest and increase the vocabulary is made the basis of recent texts. Not only is this true of most language books published within the past five years, but readers, arithmetics, hygienes, and geographies all reflect the movement. A conscious effort to enlarge the vocabulary by means of questions and helpful word lists is shown in the newer readers. The speller, as would be expected, contributes largely by means of exercises requiring the pupils to give plurals of nouns, change verbs to forms ending in *ed* and *ing*, and build long words from short ones. The several thousand words included in the newer spellers, selected from tests and investigations by Ayres, Jones, Cook, and O'Shea, are those that seem to belong in the child's writing vocabulary.

In the primary room the pupil's training begins in freedom and naturalness of expression. If this is stressed all through the grades, every one graduating from the elementary school should be able to talk for a few minutes about a familiar and interesting subject, using clear and concise language. Not many years ago "composition day" was dreaded. That was when the teacher announced the subject and said, "Write!" Nowadays oral composition almost invariably precedes the written. Perhaps the first step will be a class paragraph which the teacher places upon the board. Then a number of children give simi-

lar paragraphs. Next, each pupil will prepare his own, first thinking it through to the end. After being given orally and criticised by the class, these may be written. Simultaneously the ever important "sentence sense" is being cultivated, for we try to think of really good beginning and ending sentences. Much depends upon the subject. Several authors favor the single phase idea. Their plan is to limit the paragraph to four or five sentences and see that each sentence bears a definite relation to the topic, thus securing brevity and clearness.

Shakespeare might well have referred to the teacher when he said, "A low, clear voice is greatly to be desired in woman." One of the most effective means of teaching careful enunciation and a pleasing voice, is by example. Children are wonderful imitators, and are apt to copy the teacher's manner of speech. Mr. Guy Buswell of the University of Chicago tells of a room in which none of the pupils stammered at the beginning of the year. Yet, by the end of the term, five cases had developed through unconscious imitation of the teacher. In an investigation in six large cities, Dr. Comradi found that 2.4% of the school children had some form of speech defect, .87% being cases of severe stammerers. Among them were more boys than girls, the ratio being three to one. Although in 73% of two thousand cases studied, other members of the family stammered, there is no defect in the speech organs, hence stammering cannot be inherited. The cause is psychological, being due to fear plus self-consciousness. The remedy is to remove all tension and insist upon slow speech. Certain breathing exercises will prove beneficial.

In preparation for Better Speech-Week, the

teacher and pupils of a fourth grade room determined to make a real effort to improve the quality of their oral English. The first step was to take an inventory. This was not difficult, as a record of the language errors, together with the names of those responsible for them, was on file. These included ten incorrect verb forms, three misused pronouns, two words wrongly used, and one "ain't."

Ignorant adults and children often suffer from what may be termed "poverty of speech." Their vocabulary is meager and they are economical in the use of words. For instance, the ten verb forms which were missed twenty-three times and which made up 50% of the errors of this fourth grade, were not really language mistakes, for each was tracable to this same "poverty of speech." The child who repeatedly said "I seen" had had no difficulty in making himself understood and had not yet learned to differentiate between "seen" and "saw."

With the correction of the list of errors as one objective and an enriched vocabulary as another, the campaign for "Better English" was launched. Correct forms were printed on cards and much drill, motivated by games and contests, followed. All joined the "Do-Without-Club," promising to discard one slang phrase, or objectionable word each week, substituting an appropriate word or phrase. Posters were made bearing such slogans as "Speak the Language of Your Flag," "Clean Speech for Clean Americans," and "One Flag, One Country, One Language."

During the English period the children composed a playlet in which they showed some of their plans for an improved vocabulary. Important characters were Uncle Sam and King Better Speech, whose body guard included the strong men, *Saw*, *Did* and *Went*. Following came some weak cousins, *Seen*, *Gone* and *Done*, leaning heavily upon their partners *Has* and *Have*. The outlaw *Ain't* was with difficulty captured and placed behind the bars to serve a life sentence. Next came a couple, weary and worn. They were *Nice* and *Pretty* and, as it was proved that

they had been seriously overworked, both were ordered to the country for a long rest. Several of the company, including *Delightful*, *Fine*, *Good*, *Agreeable* and *Kind* volunteered to perform the service usually undertaken by *Nice*, while *Pleasing* and *Attractive* expressed a willingness to substitute for her companion. *Awful*, with bandaged head and one arm in a sling, claimed to have been badly abused and was hurried to the hospital. Others in trouble were dainty little *Miss Which*, who explained tearfully that the boys and girls had hurt her feelings by calling her a "witch," and *Just* and *When* who were unhappy because people were too careless to pronounce their names as they should be. Finally Uncle Sam invited the Speech King and his entire following of choice words, to remain in America forever. Since the children gave this dramatization after a single rehearsal, it was far from being a finished performance. However, both the teacher and principal felt that it was decidedly worth while.

Good speech habits and a large vocabulary go hand in hand. Let us see why. One of the first qualifications of an able speaker is clearness. "Our words," says Palmer, "should exactly fit our thoughts." Unless we are in the position of the man who "had no thoughts to think," a large vocabulary is necessary in order that our words may indeed "fit our thoughts." It has been found that vocabularies vary greatly. Professor Preyer began to talk at the age of three, whereas the baby studied by Miss Shinn, knew eighty-four words when eleven months old. Mr. Canton, after careful study, estimated that the child of six years has a vocabulary of two thousands words. The average person with an elementary school education has a vocabulary of ten thousand words, while the vocabulary of the college graduate may be from two to ten times as great. Scientific research and commerce and industry are largely responsible for the steady growth of our language while the many new words and expressions added since the World War are evidence that English is truly "a living and growing language."

# Editorial

## SAFEGUARD THE LIBRARIES

THE manager of one of Detroit's four largest bookstores commented recently that although he was selling fewer books now than three years ago, he was selling better books. There has not been a time within memory, he said, when book sales netted a greater per cent of excellent books. Someone that day, he explained, had been in for Frazer's *LEAVES FROM THE GOLDEN BOUGH*, someone else for the poems of Horace in the original. People have more time on their hands now, many of them, and they are using it to do more thinking and to read more good books. Many of them say that for years they have wanted to read, but under the strain and eternal drive of their work they could not. Out of all this depression, then, are elements of compensation.

The head of the children's department in the Detroit Public Library commented a few days ago that the young visitors both to the main reading room and to all the branch libraries are reading and using books as never before. Here again is a sign of positive reaction to the troublous times. Inside and out of schools there appears to be this turning to good books in adult and child life alike.

But someone must sound the alarm against a danger that threatens to neutralize this de-

sirable aspect of the situation. On all sides comes word that library service is being crippled both in schools and out. The Detroit Public Library, again to use this city for example, no longer opens on Sunday afternoons, and reports shortage in funds necessary for continued adequate service and books. How many other cities are curtailing the funds of their public libraries? From schools everywhere come alarming announcements that book appropriations are being drastically cut. As if books, in these hard times, are not a necessity, especially so when people on all sides have demonstrated their readiness to turn to books.

The failure to turn to good account the released energies and mental acquisitiveness of thousands of able persons who are endeavoring to utilize profitably their enforced idleness, would indeed be a great tragedy. This holds equally true for children, who feel keenly the demoralization of homes cut off from means of livelihood. They require, as never before, the best possible resources in books to offset the spiritual and mental disturbances which so widely prevail.

Teachers and school administrators are urged to unite in maintaining library facilities and book collections on a basis adequate to meet the present urgent demands.

### A CORRECTION

Attention is called to an error in the article entitled "Two Worthwhile Sayings," by Professor Sir John Adams, published in the October, 1931, *REVIEW*.

Professor Adams refers (page 185) to the

Gibeonites who were condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Inadvertently this was printed "Gideonites," although the context obviously demands "Gibeonites."



## Reviews and Abstracts

**TWO TIMES TWO IS FOUR.** By Zacharias Topelius. Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 1931. Illustrated. \$1.50

This endearing little story of Jossie, the rabbit, and Kurrie, his squirrel friend, was originally written by Zacharias Topelius for Scandinavian children. Its translator, Swedish by birth, has deftly caught the humor and whimsy of this gifted Finnish author who has been called the Hans Christian Andersen of Finland, and whose delightful writings are in popular use in the Swedish schools.

**TWO TIMES TWO IS FOUR** tells of two little woodland animals, who, like Mary's lamb, go to school one day. Their visit is short-lived for the watchman's Prissie is there.

"Who could be afraid of the watchman's Prissie?" asks Jossie bravely.

"Who could be afraid of him even if he were as big as a horse?" says Kurrie just as bravely.

But in their hearts, terror reigns when black Prissie is near, and much of the story's action comes about because of Prissie's unwelcome presence.

**TWO TIMES TWO IS FOUR** is a perfect book for six to eight year olds to read to themselves or to read aloud to their younger sisters and brothers. The print is encouragingly large—a few sentences and it is time to turn a page. Illustrations by Katherine Dewey are bright, attractive and numerous.

Mary Griffin Newton  
Detroit, Michigan

**TOBY'S GOBLIN.** By Elizabeth Howard Atkins. Rand, McNally & Company. 1931. Illustrated.

All went well in the mill. The Miller was round and jolly. His wife was neat and busy. Joan and Toby were always happy. The Miller won such a name for good nature that the King came all the way to Michaelmas Mill to cultivate him as a friend for his Royal Collection. The King collected people who could smile, much as other people collect stamps or butterflies—and for exactly the same reason—because he liked them.

Yes—all went well at the mill, until a round-pated, pointy-eared, skinny little goblin called Minikin began to pay it nightly visits. He put the miller's finest hat in the oven, Joan's Sunday shoes in the flour barrel; ripped the best table cloth and left everything in distressing disorder. Finally he went so far as to take the miller's good humor, Joan's

precious shadow, and to cause the miller's wife to lose her head. It was a truly terrible state of affairs until Toby won the Goblin's heart and poured into it a drop of human kindness.

Thin goblin Minikin and round lovable Toby, cannot escape popularity with young readers. The simply written story is fresh as dew and gallops along as merrily as a mountain stream. Uldene Trippe gives Dutch atmosphere to the mill and its inhabitants with her black and white drawings. **TOBY'S GOBLIN** can be highly recommended as good entertainment.

Mary Griffin Newton  
Detroit, Michigan

**A DAY IN A CHILD'S LIFE.** Illustrated by Kate Greenaway. Frederick Warne & Co. 1931. \$2.00

One has but to mention Kate Greenaway's name to think of hedges and rose trees and of golden haired children in quaint English dress. Her reputation as interpreter of childhood and painter of flowers is as assured today as it was at the time of her death in 1901. Born in 1846, the daughter of John Greenaway, a prominent wood engraver and draughtsman, she early fell in love with country scenes and gardens and "struck up a friendship" with flowers, especially with those that "grew of their own free will in fields and hedgerows." Through sewing for her large family of dolls this little English girl developed the interest in costume which later became such a characteristic part of her work. To her, the dress of her own times seemed very ugly. She chose to dress the children of her drawings in costumes influenced by those of the latter part of the 18th century.

Fame came easily to Kate Greenaway. Her **BIRTHDAY BOOK** was called a "masterpiece of original stamp" by German critics; was the inspiration for Stevenson's **A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSE**. Ruskin was her great admirer. She was as popular in America as in England.

We are indebted to Frederick Warne & Company for this exquisite new edition of one of Kate Greenaway's loveliest pieces of work. **A DAY IN A CHILD'S LIFE** contains nine songs set to music by Myles B. Foster, late organist of the Foundling Hospital. The Greenaway touch is on every page.

Mary Griffin Newton  
Detroit, Michigan

BOY OF THE SOUTH SEAS. By Eunice Tietjens. Coward McCann. 1931. Illustrated. \$2.50

Miss Tietjens turns to the always romantic south seas for her new juvenile—narrating the adventures of a child of the Marquesas Islands who turns stow-away on a French schooner by accident and is carried far from his home village to the Island of Moorea. Ten year old Teiki is never entirely happy in his new surroundings in spite of the big-hearted Moorean woman who adopts him, until he stumbles upon the dwelling of a lonely old hermit, a Polynesian like himself, like himself hungry for the old gods and the old customs. The boy and the gaunt ancient become fast friends and the hermit introduces Teiki to the dying art of woodcarving, showing him piece by piece his own work, and helping him patiently with his own carving. In the end the hermit places Teiki in the hands of an archaeologist who will further his talent along a line which already absorbs him, one which will keep him always in close association with the gods of his people.

The ending of the story is most unusual, logical and in perfect keeping with the ancient carver's character, but here as everywhere in the book there is a feeling of too great restraint, too much placidity. The exciting parts of the story do not excite. Teiki's homesickness, and readjustment do not move the reader to any depth of emotion. The story will have greatest appeal with quiet, thoughtful children.

Mary Griffin Newton  
Detroit, Michigan

MISS JIMMY DEANE and What Happened at Pleasant Meadows. By Rose B. Knox. Illustrated by Manning de V. Lee. Doubleday, Doran, 1931. \$2.00

MISS JIMMY DEANE is an exceptionally vivid, and as far as one can judge from this distance, accurate chronicle of those halcyon days in the South "before the war."

Because she was the sixth girl baby in the family, and, as her older sisters said, "It just looks like all our girl names are used up," she was named after her father, James Deane Alexander Talieffer—Jimmy Deane to all practical purposes. Jimmy Deane is a lively little person, and although she is in and out of mischief much of the time, she gets into no impossible situations, no adventures that strain a reader's credulity.

There is no self-conscious attempt to "create atmosphere," and no straining to get in points of information. The author manages to re-create the times, the people, and the rich Southern country simply and vividly. Especially worthy of note is the author's happy gift of giving, by a delicate turn of phrase, the tone, the inflection of these soft-voiced Southern women. With the same scrupulous accuracy, she reproduces the negro vernacular. For example, Mammy admonishes the colored seamstresses sewing for Sister's wedding, "Y'alls got to sew wid a redhot needle en a burnin' thread, or us won't be ready in time."

Miss Jimmy Deane deserves to be taken into children's affections.

D. B.

## THE VOCABULARY AND GOOD SPEECH HABITS

(Continued from page 21)

One of the best means of increasing the *reading vocabulary* is by reading good books slowly and carefully. For, Ruskin says, "Literature is thought expressed in language." It is essential then to cultivate a taste for good literature.

The *speaking vocabulary* deserves attention not only in the English period but during every recitation. Good results are more easily obtained when the semester's work is blocked out in a series of large units. For example, last year the pupils of this same fourth grade were the proud possessors of a fully equipped "grocery store" and frequently English and arithmetic were correlated. At

the same time the vocabularies were extended, and spelling ability improved.

The *writing vocabulary* is considerably smaller and is increased largely by words being carried over from the reading and speaking vocabularies. The use, oral or written, of an expressive, or "picture" word, should always be commended. A school paper may furnish a strong incentive for good writing work. If only the best material is used, it will be an honor well worth striving for to discover one's story in print.

Of the ninety Binet Intelligence tests, Terman considers the vocabulary test of greatest importance.